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Honors Humanities

The Picture of Dorian Gray

Oscar Wilde

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**Summary:** In the next section of The Picture of Dorian Gray, the plot thickens as Dorian Gray becomes fearful of the painting that Basil has drawn for him. Dorian decides to break off the engagement with Sibyl after she performed horribly at her play. He realizes that his intentions were not good because he did not necessarily fall in love with her, but her acting. When he sees the painting has changed, he feels ashamed for what he has done to Sibyl. He then realizes that the fact that the painting is changing makes sense. He wanted the painting to show the burden and masks of lifestyle for him. As it turns out, the painting is doing just that. As time goes on, the painting shows more cruelty within it. His face has changed into something not so pleasant. He then receives the news that Sibyl has committed suicide and feels very guilty for the act that he committed the previous night. He makes a promise to himself that he will try to change his outlook on life from now on and make himself a better person. However, his change turns out to not be for the better. He has turned into a heartless man, and everyone is appalled at the way he is acting. He didn’t seem to care very much that Sibyl had committed suicide. He then asks for Basil to make a painting of Sibyl to help him remember her by. Basil now wants to show his painting of Dorian to the world and Dorian is displeased. He threatens to never speak to him again if he is to show anyone or touch the painting. Dorian wants to hide the painting from Basil because he does not want Basil to see the change of the painting.

As years pass Dorian’s whole personality changes. He orders several copies of “The Yellow Book” and has them bound in different colors to match the mood changes he has. He still remains extremely attractive, but people begin to speculate what the real Dorian Gray is about. However, he begins studying the “nature of the senses.” He develops several theories of beautiful things. As the years pass, the painting still continues to deteriorate and change. Basil tries to warn Dorian that there are people who are spreading terrible rumors about him and his behavior. Basil wants to know who the real Dorian Gray is, and what his soul is really like. Is it only up for God to know this?

**Analyze**: I really enjoyed this section of the book. I think that the beginning was a little slow to start off with, but as the plot went on, that’s when it got more exciting. I feel like there is something that the author is still not revealing. It makes me wonder if this story is tricking us into thinking there isn’t another reason why Dorian has been changing and seeing his painting is changing. I think that this is a really good idea for a story. I also like how the painting resembles the change in Dorian Gray’s soul.

**Application**: Throughout the story, I noticed a lot of inherit human characteristics have applied. There is love, which has not changed over time. Dorian felt love at the first sight of Sibyl, and she felt the same for him. Even though Dorian may be extremely good looking and does not appear to age, he still feels the same feelings that most other human beings feel. In addition, he loathes the sight of the painting the fact of reality taking over him and changing him over time. We still see the same changes in people just like we see in Dorian Gray. He goes through rapid personality changes throughout the book. Whether it is the past or present, change is inevitable. We all change at one point or another; some people for the better and some for the worst. In this case, we see Dorian changing for the worst.